**Performing lost repertoires: seventeenth-century French keyboard music from the perspective of Mersenne's 1636 clavichord**

**Terence Charlston (RCM)**

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17.00 - 18.30  
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The description of the clavichord in Mersenne's *Harmonie Universelle* (1636) is sufficiently detailed to have enabled the clavichord maker, Peter Bavington, to build a working example. This meticulous and very musical reconstruction invites the player to find a repertoire appropriate to it and in so doing challenges, in a variety of technical and interpretative ways, their view of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century French keyboard music. The obstacles encountered in defining an appropriate repertoire are considerable. Although clavichords were made, known and played at this time in France, no clavichords of demonstrable French provenance survive today. The sources of French keyboard music are themselves problematic, and very few survive from the period after Attaingnant's five publications for '*Orgues, Espinettes et Manichordions*' of 1531 and before the relative wealth of surviving late seventeenth-century manuscripts and printed books. Not surprisingly, the literature and discography have tended to emphasise the importance of the professional French *clavecinistes* and organists and in so doing underestimate the role of other keyboard instruments, such as the clavichord. By attempting to redress this balance, the Mersenne clavichord project has revealed three main areas of enquiry: the definition of the techniques of known clavichord music of the early sixteenth century; an examination of the few surviving sources of the early seventeenth century; and an assessment of the performance implications for the mainstream harpsichord and organ corpus. The results of this creative interaction will be presented and performed by the speaker during the seminar using the primary research tool, the Bavington/Mersenne clavichord itself.

**Terence Charlston** enjoys a varied career as a performer, teacher and academic researcher, specialising in early keyboard instruments. He took degrees in Oxford and London in organ, harpsichord and musicology. Terence's repertoire spans the sixteenth century to the present day, reflecting a passionate interest in keyboard music of all types and styles and his discography numbers over seventy commercial recordings on harpsichord, organ, virginals, clavichord and fortepiano. He was a member of London Baroque from 1995 until 2007 and is a core member of the ensemble Florilegium with whom he has toured worldwide. Terence is an important advocate of early keyboard instruments within the educational sphere. He founded the Department of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music in 1995. In addition to his work as professor of harpsichord at the Royal College of Music, London, he teaches basso continuo at the Royal Academy of Music, London, and is International Visiting Tutor in harpsichord at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.